

Board of SBVI  
Draft Minutes  
December 9, 2016  
Pierre, SD

Members Present: Dr. Lynda O'Connor, Gaye Mattke, Catherine Greseth, Julie Briggs, Cole Uecker, Roberta Ecoffey, Bruce Micheel, Alan Vandenburg, Koni Sims, Kay Miller, Cheri Knispel, Eric Rippentrop

Members Absent: Connie Sullivan, Patrick Czerny, Tana Buresch, Marcia Hultman

Others Present: Sandy Neyhart, Ronda Williams, Nancy Hoyme, Becky Blume

Eric Rippentrop called the meeting to order and passed the gavel to Dr. Lynda O'Connor, the new Board chair.

Catherine Greseth made a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried.

Julie Briggs made a motion to approve the agenda. Eric Rippentrop seconded. Motion carried.

### **Board of SBVI Annual Report**

The Annual Report is required to be submitted to the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Board members were asked for their recommendations for edits to the report. The report highlights Board sponsored activities including Governor's Awards, White Cane Awareness Day, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month events. The Vocational Rehabilitation section includes demographic information, purchased services, causes of impairments, occupations, types of referrals, and services to minorities. This section also highlights the Consumer Satisfaction Survey results and three year trends. Success stories are also in the report. It was suggested to include the story about the Independent Living Champion award presented to Ted with the Remember Program for his work to help keep people in their homes. Catherine presented the award at Strengthening the Circle. The website for Remember Program is <http://www.re-member.org/> The Independent Living section covers data, as well as, the unique programs such as CCTV loan/lease program and the Assistive Technology Access Project. It was suggested to include an IL success story. The Rehab Center section also covers data and information on services in the past year. The success story listed under

SDRC will be updated to include that the individual has been hired for the position that was originally available through the Employment Skills Training program on a temporary basis. The Business Enterprise Program section gives details regarding vendors and sales information. Koni Sims made a motion to approve the annual report with the recommended edits. Eric Rippentrop seconded. Motion carried.

### **Competitive Integrated Employment Program Guide**

Ronda Williams, SBVI Assistant Director shared information on the draft program guide which provides guidance for addressing the requirements from federal regulations for competitive, integrated employment. There is an evaluation form to be completed by counselors to confirm employment is both competitive AND integrated. Counselors will decide on a case-by-case basis if employment fits both categories. To satisfy the definition of "competitive integrated employment," the employment must meet the requirements for all three of these components: competitive earnings, integrated location, and opportunities for advancement. Employment as an unpaid family member, homemaker or sheltered workshop, group employment settings such as enclaves or mobile work crews, and entities set up specifically for the purpose of providing employment to people with disabilities are not considered competitive integrated employment. Eric Rippentrop made a motion to approve the program guide. Cheri Knispel seconded. Motion carried.

### **Governors Awards**

Eric Rippentrop attended the Governors Awards and shared that the event was meaningful. He participated in a follow-up committee call to discuss what is working and what is not working for the awards. The committee plans to change wording so the categories are easier to understand. Nominations can be made year round and the application will be on the website. The question remains of how to get more nominations. The DHS Communications Officer will do press releases and also promote the awards on Facebook and Twitter. In the past, the SBVI Board's Public Relations committee nominated an individual who is visually impaired or blind for the awards each year. Board members agreed that this would be a good idea to implement again and suggested nominating someone with a success story from the annual report. Counselors will be encouraged to nominate employers and/or employees. Information about the awards will be sent to the Tribal VR programs in order for VR staff and Directors to participate in the nomination process for these awards.

## **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**

Catherine Greseth presented at NDEAM events in Brookings and Sisseton. Her daughter, Mary, spoke at Sioux Valley School and in Madison. The Rapid City event had over 200 people in attendance. There was extensive media coverage of the event. The Sioux Falls event was a panel of speakers. Koni Sims attended, along with her boss, and learned about programs available and shared that the event provided useful information. The Governor presented in Pierre and shared his personal story of his parents who were deaf, their struggle to obtain viable employment during a time when farming was no longer an option and he expanded on their strong work ethic which carried them through to obtaining successful employment. The Eagle Butte event and walk was well attended and promoted employment of citizens with disabilities with traditional song and native dance. There were 13 NDEAM events around South Dakota with a total 2029 attendees (395 from schools). The report is attached.

## **White Cane Awareness Day/March**

Koni Sims participated in the White Cane Awareness Day and March. She stated that it was the most successful event they have held to promote awareness of laws related to users of the white cane. Approximately 78 people participated in the event which had a new route on 41<sup>st</sup> Street in Sioux Falls. Shawn Cable and Kamie Roesler with KSFY News also participated and wore blindfolds during the walk. They provided additional awareness by reporting about their experience on the KSFY news. Bob Smith, Certified Orientation and Mobility instructor with SDRC helped coordinate the event and provided some guidance and instruction during the march. The China Express invited the group to meet at their business before and after the march. Greg Jamison, former city commissioner, and Ryan Odland, regional representative from Helen Keller both spoke at the event. The police had originally expressed concern about safety due to the heavy traffic on 41<sup>st</sup> Street, but did an awesome job directing traffic to ensure safety of the group. The Board supported by covering the cost of sign language interpreters for the event.

## **Fall Conference**

Catherine Greseth, Julie Briggs, and agency staff members attended the Fall Conference. Everyone agreed it was a very good conference with a

nice variety of topics. Rather than a speaker for the luncheon, there was a Native American dancer. Pre-conference tours were also held at the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center and Job Corps. In 2017, the Fall Conference will be held in Pierre. Department of Labor & Regulation will partner to host the event.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation Program Satisfaction Surveys**

Ronda Williams informed the Board that the survey was developed by Dr. Alan Davis and has been used the past eight years. There was a 44% response rate. Ronda works with support staff at the Rehabilitation Center to mail the surveys quarterly, track the responses and conduct follow-up phone calls to increase the response rate. Dr. Davis analyzes the data at the end of the year. All questions had a response rate of 3.28 out of 4 or higher. The question asking if services helped the individual emotionally adjust to the vision loss was the lowest at 3.28. The question if the individual needed more help, would they come back for more services was the highest at 3.82. The results are included in the annual report. Catherine Greseth made a motion to accept the report. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried.

### **Board Committees**

Discussion ensued on the role and makeup of Board committees. The Executive Committee consists of the Chair (Lynda O'Connor-Ohayon), Vice-Chair (Bruce Micheel), and Member-at-Large (Catherine Greseth). The Executive committee also serves as the Bylaw committee. Gaye Mattke, Division Director is the contact for the Executive Committee.

The Strategic Planning and Policy committee members include Bruce Micheel, Connie Sullivan, Eric Rippentrop, Marcia Hultman, and Alan Vandenburg. Ronda Williams is the staff liaison. This committee meets when necessary to review draft policies and the state plan. As the Client Assistance Program representative with South Dakota Advocacy Services, Cole Uecker agreed to serve on this committee.

Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) members include Patrick Czerny, Lynda O'Connor, JoMarie Laughlin, and Chelle Hart. Nancy Hoyme is the staff liaison. ATAC is comprised of Board members and other members who have vision loss and use assistive technology. The ATAC developed a resource guide that is on the SBVI website, and also assists with new policies related to assistive technology.

Public Relations (PR) committee members include Julie Briggs, Catherine Greseth, Eric Rippentrop, and staff liaison Sandy Neyhart. Koni Sims offered to be on this committee. Roberta Ecoffey suggested that SBVI partner with the Tribal VR to do a public forum over the radio stations, not just Pine Ridge, but all tribes. She would like Heath Ducheneaux to be on the PR committee on her behalf.

Catherine Greseth and Julie Briggs are the SBVI representatives on the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) committee. Eric Rippentrop is the SBVI representative on the Governor's Awards committee.

It was suggested that the PR committee meet prior to the next Board meeting to address Governor's Awards and tribal marketing/outreach.

### **Business Enterprise Program**

Nancy Hoyme informed the Board that there are currently 4 BEP vendors in Aberdeen, Yankton, Huron, and Pierre. The EROS site in rural Sioux Falls is vacant at this time. The Aberdeen vendor plans to operate EROS as a satellite until a permanent manager is identified. She is working on hiring employees who will run the cafeteria on a day to day basis. BEP has 53 vending machines. The program also assists with supplemental insurance, retirement, and sick/vacation leave for the vendors. The Pierre vendor is currently working with the local Community Support Provider for filling the machines on his vending route.

### **Independent Living**

Sandy Neyhart reported that the Rapid City office is currently the only office with a vacancy, but that is soon to change. She has been working on her federal report which is due by the end of the year. Most of the information in her report is also included in the annual report. The federal report also includes costs of services and staff information. Overall, the number of individuals served in the IL program has decreased but Rehab Teachers conduct two or three outreach events each month which increases the opportunity for people to understand about the services available. Sandy has received success stories from Rehabilitation Teachers and will insert these into the annual report.

## **Rehab Center for the Blind**

Gaye Mattke reported on behalf of Dawn Backer. First Fridays have continued at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. They have started to incorporate all of skills of blindness classes, rather than just assistive technology. The event was successful the first time; however it was not as successful the second month. This approach is a good way for people who want additional information about services or blindness to learn about the Center and obtain limited skills training. Another walk-in assistive technology clinic will be held in December. Transition Week is scheduled for June 11-15, 2017. During the summer months, more high school students attend SDRC. Lori Kwasniewski facilitates classes to include transition topics such as Knowing Self, Knowing your Disability, Career Interest Inventory, SD MyLife, ONet, First Impression, and Networking. The students also went to the Sioux Falls SBVI District Office, where they toured and learned that the SBVI rehabilitation counselors are co-located with Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) offices. They also attended the Passport Workshops, which were developed by the DLR. SDRC will continue to work with Department of Labor and Regulation to collaborate on service options for students.

Lori Kwasniewski, Program Specialist at SDRC is certified through SD Parent Connection to provide Person Centered Transition Assessments (PCTA). She is able to provide assessments for transition age students. A Person Centered Transition Assessment uses strategies from Person Centered Thinking and involves a transition assessment, Student involvement, Identifies students' interests/needs, Establishes Post-Secondary Goals, Identifies coordinated set of activities, Supports self-advocacy, person directed planning and self-determination, and is a coordinated effort between school districts and adult agencies.

Mary Tommeraasen, Employment Skills Instructor is a certified brain injury specialist. Mary is available to assist field counselors and teachers who work with people with a brain injury. She also participates in the SD Brain Injury Coalition work group, the Alzheimer's support group, and stroke support group.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Ronda Williams reported that Rebecca Andrew has been hired as the Counselor in the Rapid City office. She will begin on January 3rd. Ronda will work with her to determine what she will need to obtain her Masters

in Rehab Counseling. The divisions of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Rehabilitation Services and Department of Labor and Regulation have been meeting quarterly to coordinate efforts to meet goals and objectives in the Unified State plan. The Department had 2 summer initiatives – Pre Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities and employer based work experiences. Requests for Proposals will be available in January rather than April so recipients will have more time for planning. The annual Tribal and State Vocational Rehabilitation meeting is scheduled for December 13<sup>th</sup> in Rapid City.

### **Director's Report**

The Statewide Independent Living Council requested the Governor convene workgroup to address assistive technology (AT) needs of South Dakota citizens with disabilities. Ken Rollman offered to be the SBVI Board representative on the workgroup. His term has since expired, but he is still willing to represent the Board of SBVI on the workgroup. The AT workgroup held a meeting via DDN on December 1<sup>st</sup> and discussed the SILC recommendations and the perspective the workgroup members on what is working and not working related to access of AT devices and training. The AT workgroup consists of SILC Chair, representatives from Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of SBVI, Statewide Independent Living Council, DakotaLink, Public Utilities Commission, Tribal VR, South Dakota Advocacy Services, Social Services, Behavioral Health and Human Services. Ken was not in attendance at the meeting due to materials and being sent to an incorrect email address. He has agreed to represent the Board at future meetings and Board members agreed that they would support his representation. There is a draft AT Resource Directory that will be shared on internet websites and newsletters.

Roberta Ecoffey suggested that SBVI coordinate with South Dakota Advocacy Services to hold a public forum in Kyle in May. The National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota has requested that a public forum be held in conjunction with their convention in the spring. Koni Sims expressed that the South Dakota Association of the Blind would be interested in hosting a public forum in conjunction with their convention in September. SBVI will also partner with Department of Labor and Regulation for public forums to fulfill requirements of the WIOA regulations.

The Governor recently gave his budget address. Sales tax revenue is down so the budget will be tight; however, no cuts are recommended.

There are currently no legislative issues for SBVI. The 2017 Legislative Session will be January 10 – March 10, with Veto Day on March 27<sup>th</sup>. The Legislative Research Council website is <http://www.sdlegislature.gov/>

Connie Sullivan has agreed to represent the Board on the Disability Advisory Network (DAN). This group meets to discuss any legislation that may have an impact on citizens with disabilities.

Disability Awareness Day is held at the Capitol in February. This event is organized by the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities and is an opportunity for disability organizations to present information to the public and legislators about disabilities. The South Dakota Association of the Blind plans to have someone in attendance. Eric Rippentrop made a motion for the Board to pay the booth costs for Disability Awareness Day. Catherine Greseth seconded. Motion carried.

The next Board meeting will be scheduled for March 24, 2017.

Bruce Micheel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Koni Sims seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.